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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, our souls thirst for You. Enable us to hear Your songs in the night and be vivified by Your spirit. Lord, forgive us when we forget how Your gracious hand has preserved our Nation, multiplying, enriching, and sustaining it. Use our lawmakers to keep America strong, reminding them that eternal vigilance is the price for freedom. Thank You for drawing us into the multitude of Your mercy, permitting us to experience abundant living, as we make a commitment to not deviate from the path of integrity.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 243, S. 1356.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 243, S. 1356, a bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to strengthen the United States workforce development system

through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Patricia Millett to be U.S. circuit judge for the DC Circuit and immediately vote on confirmation of that nomination.

Senators should expect additional votes this morning with respect to reconsideration of the cloture vote on the nomination of MEL WATT to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

MILLETT AND WATT NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, this morning the Senate will consider the nomination of Patricia Millett to serve on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, considered by many to be the second highest court in the land. We postponed this vote last night out of consideration for a number of Senators whose flights were delayed by bad weather. I thank my colleagues for their patience. And I am pleased that today Ms. Millett will finally get the fair, up-or-down vote she deserves.

Ms. Millett is exceedingly qualified for this position. She graduated at the top of her class from the University of Illinois at Urbana and attended Harvard Law School. Ms. Millett has argued more than 32 cases before the Supreme Court, including one while her husband was deployed overseas with the U.S. Navy. She also served as Assistant Solicitor General under both President Bill Clinton and President George Bush.

She enjoys bipartisan support from a variety of law enforcement officials, legal professionals, and military organizations. And it is my honor to help confirm a woman whom colleagues have called fair-minded, principled, and exceptionally gifted.

I will also move to reconsider the nomination of Congressman MEL WATT to serve as Administrator of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

Congressman WATT graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Yale Law School. He has represented North Carolina's 12th Congressional District since 1993 and served as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. And as a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee, Mr. WATT understands the mistakes that led to the housing crisis.

Yet last month Senate Republicans blocked Congressman WATT's nomination—the first time a sitting Member of Congress has been filibustered since 1843, since before the Civil War. They denied Congressman WATT even the courtesy of an up-or-down vote.

Congressman WATT proposed legislation to crack down on the worst abuses in mortgage lending and helped pass the Dodd-Frank bill to prevent predatory lending. By any measure, Congressman WATT is qualified to help struggling homeowners recover from the worst economic downturn in generations.

And at a moment when America still faces difficult economic times—and as the housing market is finally beginning to recover—it is crucial the Senate confirm the most talented and dedicated individuals to serve in the executive branch of government.

It is critical that the Senate confirm Congressman WATT to lead the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

This week the Senate will also consider a number of other highly qualified judicial and executive branch nominees.

The 13 district court nominees on the calendar have been waiting an average of 56 days for a confirmation vote—almost twice as long as the average at this point in President Bush's second term.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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